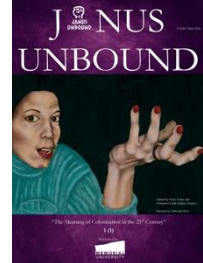


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The Death of Postcolonialism: The Founder's Foreword

Mohamed Salah Eddine Madiou



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Postcolonialism¹ stands today in flagrant contradiction with its mission. This assertion should scarcely come as a surprise. Come to think of it: what has postcolonialism done to colonization in the past few decades, save passively reflecting on it and its realities that often do not fit the reality of things? How much leeway does postcolonialism give its critic in expressing opposition to colonization? And how does it rate as a field for serious decolonization? As a start toward answering these questions, or coming close to answering them, the following pages offer a commentary on how I feel about postcolonialism. I will confine myself to one particular reason I consider postcolonialism *a dismal failure*, which is incontestable and will hopefully startle the dull reader into alertness. I prefer here simple words with a direct message and no opaque subtleties.

That postcolonialism is a problematic concept, trend, discourse, idea, field of research, theory, condition, study, and what have you is, today, not a debatable question. Many have addressed the various pitfalls of postcolonialism as time (supposedly with a hyphen)² and discourse (supposedly without a hyphen) from Anne McClintock who describes the concept as paradoxical because it runs counter to the “imperial idea of linear time” (1993, 292) to Arif Dirlik (1994), Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge (1993) who all associate it with the abstract realm of postmodernism. While I had a high opinion of Mishra and Hodge’s early view in “What is Post(-)colonialism?”³ I do not adhere to their view in their sequel “What was Post(-)colonialism?” whose title, with the “was,” implies that postcolonialism is dead and buried, but whose content argues that it almost is and is still alive.

Mishra and Hodge, *in nuce*, argue that there are two postcolonialisms: one that dominates the present and another one that once was. Both Mishra and Hodge mostly and most ambivalently side with the once-was postcolonialism which is, for them, the most postcolonial of all the postcolonialisms, one they associate with Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Chinua Achebe, C.L.R. James, and other like-minded critics and artists. If one pauses here and thinks hard about it, can these critics and artists really be considered postcolonial? In other words, were they really speaking from a postcolonial space/context/discipline? Or was it rather a

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space/context/discipline (or is it indiscipline?) that was not postcolonial but that generations of critics have stubbornly called it that as is the case of Derrida who himself says he is not poststructuralist (1999, 229); still generations of critics insist he be called that? Many call Edward Said “the father of postcolonialism,” a position none of his texts justify, nor does he himself speak to. Said and the above figures of resistance were in reality speaking from a colonial, *not* postcolonial context. And precisely because of their colonized condition, their voices emerged as purporting a *raw, oppositional, confrontational* (never strategic) criticism of colonialism and colonization. In this context of academic gossip and careless labels, even Gayatri Spivak who announced her separation from postcolonialism is still being affiliated with it. Ask any postcolonial critic; they will tell you in a Lord-Jim attitude that she is “one of them.”

Mishra and Hodge are nostalgic about those past days of what they consider to be the *real* postcolonialism, yet they still believe that postcolonialism, today and yesterday, “has been a proactive and radically anticolonial theory of and from margins, an articulation from the position of silence and exclusion, and we do not put that in question” (2005, 395), which I sternly refute. We need only briefly recall the quite stunning acquiescence of postcolonialism to the abstract world of postmodernism, as discussed by Mishra and Hodge themselves in their prequel (1993, 289), to say that it is *only* proactive when it comes to conceptual drama. Since it acquired postmodern characteristics, postcolonialism became abstract, indeed *so* abstract that it lost grasp of reality and can be said to speak today (and yesterday)—to reframe Mishra and Hodge’s view—from the “position of silence and exclusion” in that it *silences, excludes, colonizes* rather than voices, includes, decolonizes.

Then why, one would ask, has postcolonialism become so important in the intellectual sphere if it does not decolonize?⁴ And why does the concept itself still enjoy widespread use and academic clout? The longevity of postcolonialism rests on one particular reason: its problems. It is its problems as a concept and a discourse, and its problematic identity, formation, and referentiality (or what “postcolonialism” refers to) that made it known and fashionable, *not* its “solutions.” The inconsistencies and paradoxes this concept was born with and the *more* inconsistencies and paradoxes it came up with when it brushed past the postmodern advent have seduced critics who find those problems grist for the intellectual mill. The conceptual vulnerability of postcolonialism became a *distraction* and, for some reason, *more* important than the colonial problems it was supposed to study/criticize. Aside from conceptual problems, content problems such as hypocrisy make postcolonialism further dubious; *worse*, a dismal failure as I call it above. Let us take stock.

Questions on the hypocrisy of postcolonialism have long stalked me—and here I felt tempted to give another title to this foreword. I have been stunned, for instance, by the events happening lately in Palestine involving the expulsion of Sheikh Jarrah’s native citizens from their own lands, an issue that did not receive the attention it deserves from the supposedly postcolonial critic—nor did Palestine for that matter. When recently checking out the issues of a few renowned journals that supposedly make postcolonial interventions,⁵ I, to my discontent, found none in favour of Palestine in the context of what happened lately, which is perforce excluded and often *hardly* receives the honor of a name

in the same venues of publication. A postcolonial entity, be it a journal, an institution, a researcher, or a critic, cannot write on colonial matters, reflect on them, and try to “intellectually” study/criticize them without speaking of Palestine; their anticolonialism would otherwise be a lot of hot air. Most importantly, a postcolonial critic cannot be involved in postcolonial studies and disregard a “traditional” and what I call a Warientalist case of colonization that is still present in the 21st century and shows the most flagrant manifestation of power and the crassest form of human greed (Madiou 2021). Yet one thing in particular causes me to react even more fiercely: a postcolonial critic cannot use the works of the so-called “father of postcolonialism” without mentioning where that father is and speaks from, which is a *Palestinian*, colonized context, and without mentioning Palestine wherein all his works are deeply rooted.

Palestine in fact seldom gets the chance to be discussed in postcolonial studies. In “Gaps, Silences and Absences: Palestine and Postcolonial Studies,” Patrick Williams expresses this very reality in a manner that is penetrating; his words deserve all the more attention: “Th[e] absence [of Palestine] is, or should be, deeply embarrassing for a discipline [postcolonialism] that likes to think of itself as critically insightful, politically savvy and the like, but which is incomprehensibly ignoring the most striking contemporary example of brutally enforced colonialism” (2015, 87). But Palestine being ignored is, I argue, more than just “an absence;” it is *avoidance* to which I turn below in more detail.

The resistance of a critic, who is duty-bound to intellectually denounce injustice, should, I believe, be tested on Palestine. Ask any critic what they think of Palestine; their answer will give you a clear view of their position as a human being first and a critic second. Responses will vary: some will show support to Palestinians; many⁶ to Israelis. Many will have nothing to say about Palestine; many others will be cagey about its colonial matter. Many will adopt a neutral, sometimes indifferent point of view that betrays a colonial stance; many others will not even know what Palestine is or where it is located. Many will ahistorically consider Palestine a question; many more almost a dirty word. Some will write on Palestine because of resistance; many will write on it to project, for some reason, a fakely fair and human image of themselves—these critics are to me equivalent to those who write bad cheques against an empty bank account. And there are those many who speak out both sides of their mouth. But the response I consider the most dangerous is *avoidance*.

Avoidance in a “postcolonial” context is that ill-intentioned refusal to confront a colonial issue that can show what injustice and evil truly are. It is that way of making something important unimportant, of putting it aside for fear, of toning it down, of blocking it from view, of not talking about it, of making it non-existent, of unlearning it, of cleansing it off the map of major concerns, of making it disappear in a puff of smoke. Avoidance, in this context, tampers with truth and justice, and is, therefore, ideological: *colonial* even. Jean Paul Sartre got it right—at least on this particular point in his career—when he said: “[T]o allow your mind to be diverted [or to avoid], however slightly, is as good as being the accomplice in crime of colonialism” (1963, 24). Avoidance, however, should not only be understood as not discussing/not confronting an issue; avoidance is practised even when it indisputably seems that the issue is discussed/confronted.

One particular example stands out here: the use of phrases such as “Israel-Palestine war” and “Israel-Palestine conflict” by those very few postcolonial critics who supposedly deal with Palestine. These phrases may seem unavoidable, but they inherently *are* avoidist. They do not put the blame on the one that must be blamed; rather, they pacify,⁷ *neutralize* the situation, which automatically places the practitioners of these phrases on the side of colonialism even though they try to cut a fine figure by showing that they side with resistance.

There is more room for elaboration here. These two phrases (and, by extension, the postcolonial critics who use them) slyly (perhaps sometimes unknowingly) place Israel and Palestine on the same level of horrors, violations, and crimes committed, thus making both Israel and Palestine *evenly* blamable and evenly condemnable, which does not fit the reality of things. The goings-on in Palestine are no “Israel-Palestine war” or “Israel-Palestine conflict,” but a settler-colonization, violation, and war *committed by* Israel in/on Palestine, which is different from what these avoidist phrases suggest. What is surprising is that they are even sometimes unconsciously used by those who are themselves anti-Zionist and side with Palestine heart and soul. Other examples of avoidance-non-avoidance are the use of “Jerusalem” on its own rather than “Jerusalem *in* Palestine.” Another one is “Ramallah” as a supposed capital of Palestine rather than “Jerusalem, *the* capital of Palestine.” I am not saying that those very few postcolonial critics who deal with Palestine always do this with malice and fear; oftentimes, they do this because, despite their studying Palestine, they do not know anything about it, which in many ways makes them unadulterated Orientalists, even re-Orientalists in some cases.

It should not be understood that I am here trying to convince postcolonialism and its critics not to avoid Palestine and to include it in their so-called critical studies. I rather believe that Palestine should *never* be affiliated with this discipline; Palestine has nothing to do with postcolonialism and should not, with justice and respect, be considered part of it simply because associating it with “post” marks, logically, a *very* problematic, disconcerting rupture in its so far continuous colonial reality and struggles. The future of Palestine should not depend on postcolonialism which is not only already not doing much in the present but also bodes ill for the future, but on *resistance* only. I am aware that a pretty extensive selection of colonial cases could be made of which it would be necessary to speak in much the same terms. But I insist on Palestine here because it is what many would call an “international question,” a space where the battle between good and evil is the most clearly pronounced and concentrated. Solely focusing on Palestine, which does not seem to matter two pins to postcolonial studies and its lemmings, I deem it sufficient to say that postcolonialism is all appearance with basically no content; and anyone thinking this untrue has clearly not done much thinking.

Without demur, most have over the years glibly accepted postcolonialism as critical studies of colonialism. I beg to differ. In view of the above avoidance, I see nothing in this discipline that deserves to be called criticism. What I see is academic curtsy, *well-disciplined* criticism, and a modest (read very moderate) form of resistance (if it can be called resistance at all) that is afraid to offend, even when the offender unquestioningly deserves to be offended. Postcolonialism encourages a form of resistance that, I feel, is annoyingly polite, tries desperately

to beautify the ugly, tones down the most noisily horrid of situations, and *avoids* with verve and skill the most serious colonial issues. I see in postcolonialism something that scorns the oppressed and truth, and which a responsible critic cannot endure without losing themselves. This one reason (i.e., avoidance), which many would consider so small a reason for so big an accusation, furnishes quite accurately a sense of how postcolonialism is a dismal failure.

The above sorry state of affairs could have been averted if postcolonial critics⁸ had not shirked their responsibilities and bothered to do their critical homework. Of course, there are many admirable critics, including some who identify as “postcolonial,” among them Williams himself, Tahrir Hamdi (2017), Marc Lamont Hill (2018), Terri Ginsberg (2016), whose brave positionality we ought to take as valuable contributions to our moral, *anticolonial* heritage. And many journals too; one could give the example of the Edward-Said-founded journal of *Arab Studies Quarterly* edited by Ibrahim Aoudé, which gives justice to the oppressed through intellectually voicing their cause and making it heard. But I would not call them “postcolonial,” even though they may insist they be affiliated with it or may show no objection to being called “postcolonial,” because of an *ideological* value I believe to be conferred on the appellation, meaning, and discourse of “postcolonialism.” “Postcolonial” is a name that I associate with avoidance and with something that has problems in terms of both form and content. The name, for instance, refers to something that is not yet here and—as shall be explained—will never be; it has an escapistly, ahistorically, and, to reshape Said’s dearest concept, “[un]worldly” (1983, 4) “post” that (claims to) refer(s) to a *rupture* from colonialism that is not yet seen and experienced in our reality. While the concept claims that colonialism is *past*, the discourse ambivalently insists that it is not (yet), and while the concept claims that we are *out of* the colonial reality and *in* the *postcolonial* one, the discourse ambivalently insists that we are not (yet). Postcolonialism cannot refer, as some would have us believe, to a work or project in progress or a promise in the future to come. To reap future benefits, one has to work in the present and confront the past, which postcolonialism, through its critical lethargy and ideological avoidance, does not do. It has never been clear who coined this concept, but it can be said with certainty that it is deformed, unfinished, delivered before its time.

I would go further to upset the postcolonial critic by saying that a responsible critic, conscious of the very insupportable problematicity of postcolonialism (the name to start with), knowledgeable about colonial matters and about how the world functions power-wise knows, or *should* know that there has never been and will never be a “post,” that we are still *in*, and that the world has been and will always be colonial. What I mean here is that colonialism is *not* escapable,¹⁰ particularly today and more so tomorrow, and “returns at the moment of its disappearance” (McClintock 1993, 293). Colonialism as first power and second the most ideological of ideologies, be it in its crude, hegemonic or any other form, cannot be escaped simply because the world is inescapably made of cut-throat quests for *power*, which are ubiquitous and for which everyone vies. Because of this incontestable power-is-everywhere reality, very much clear for those who do not bury their head in the sand, “regression into ideology [power, and colonization occurs] at the very point where we apparently step out of it”

(Žižek 1994, 13). The minute one decolonizes oneself is the minute one is colonized again or subject to another, *other* forms of colonizations. To the question how one shall ever be able to extricate oneself from the obvious insanity of this eternal colonialism, or this power that is everywhere, one answer, however unoriginal it may sound, is possible: *resistance*, which should be characterized by *resist and resist again* that should never stop. But how can one resist if power is everywhere, as Williams asks in an email response to this foreword? Resistance does not depend on power being everywhere but on the *flaws* of power. It is because the power-system is not *fully* square, infallible, or perfect in its systemic “reasoning” that resistance is feasible.

Let us return to postcolonialism, assuming we have ever left it. Postcolonialism has reneged on its “promise of criticism” (Madiou 2020, 292) and resistance, and engaged in the shady business of avoidance. It neither “speak[s] truth to power” (Said 1994, xvi) nor does it oppose the way opposition should be done. And when it claims to oppose, it is on eggshells and toward *a particular* colonial context that is of interest to its critics and to the status quo, *very rarely* to all the colonial cases that exist in the world and *very much rarely* to those colonial cases that need serious attention, such as Palestine. And here, I would like to ask the following question: how does a stance as passive as the postcolonial one link to resistance? I would rather characterize postcolonialism as the nadir of the long career of and the most shameful moment in the history of resistance. *Worse*, as a charlatan notable for its unconcern about decolonization and its unsubtle endorsement of colonialism.

When it comes to colonization and colonialism, there is admittedly much complexity involved. Still, it is never complex to determine who the colonizer is, who the colonized is, and by whom the colonization is committed. However, agreeing on some sort of “peace” (read “reconciliation” here) after decades of horrors and violence is, albeit necessary, very complex. It is complex not because it involves complex intellectual thinking, but because it involves complex nonsense. Consider the Algerian case (and it is not the most severe case of all): one-and-a-half-million martyrs—a number that does not include those who have not been counted; adding to this a panoply of horrors and violence, and “peace” was agreed upon with the colonizer as if almost nothing happened. You would say that peace was necessary. I flatly agree. But this is precisely what makes it *not* peace.

In this colonial context, the one(s) suggesting “peace” dismiss(es) (sometimes unaware) the colonial horrors committed as past and, by extension, unimportant, and wipes the bloodily dirty slate almost clean, and sometimes *so* clean that one might even think nothing dirty or bloody ever happened. “Peace,” in this context, is a call to focus on the present; it is *avoidance* of the past. Yet, peace—Derrida would call it “a promise” (1994, 111)—is never part of the present and can never be achieved in the present simply because it is too ambitious a project, one that requires constant working on, *confrontation* with the past—which is part of what he calls “exappropriation”¹¹—responsibility, and justice towards the future to come. I feel tempted to say that a starter for peace, in a colonial context,

is meting out punishment for the colonial horrors committed by the colonizer. But this never happens in a real-life context because of *power*¹² and its complex conniving schemes. And when “it happens,” punishment is ambivalent at most and seldom (if ever) resorted to the way it should be—meaning a punishment that fits the crime. I see peace in this context as outright impossible in the present and in the future (if the past is not confronted)—in a long list of all sorts of impossible things in a colonial context—and all the more inconceivable simply because, aside from power, one cannot engage in horrid pursuits and acts and all of a sudden decide to kiss and make up. A peace that is hastily agreed upon in the present without due confrontation of the past should be suspected simply because it is not genuine. Genuine peace requires confrontation, time, honesty, good intentions among other things.

Peace is as seductive as the belief in it, but peace defined by power has nothing of peace or reconciliation in it and is as deadly seductive as a siren can be. A genuine decision to be in peace should come from *oppositional* resistance, not from strategic negotiation with the colonizer, from which crumbs of profit and bourgeois positions can be enjoyed along the way and which in many ways makes both the signee and signer partners in crime. Or as Sartre puts it, “[W]e only become what we are by the radical and deep-seated refusal of that which others made of us” (1963, 17). Only through *oppositional* resistance can one hope to make good on the promise of peace; it is *not* through negotiating, blindly consenting to strategic agreements with what once played havoc on us, and accepting what has been inherited from the incompetence, sometimes deliberate alteration and avoidance of intermediaries. Resistance—*oppositional*, *not* strategic—is the first step on the long path of *the* peace; it is that *unbound* and disinterested act that defends the right and the just, *not* what one thinks is right and just. A peace defined by confrontation and resistance is a step to peace indeed; a peace defined by avoidance and power is a peace in word, not in deed.

The above hypocrisy (many would prefer the term avoidance) is one of the reasons I created *Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies*. The project had been dusting on the shelf for two years before I decided to bring together researchers, scholars, and renowned critics of resistance and look for a publisher. I set out on this arduous journey with Ilan Pappé and Tahrir Hamdi who reacted with enthusiasm to the project because they saw *hope* within it. And although the project struggled a great deal against overwhelming publishing odds, mistrust, suspicion, and also academic gossip on the part of publishers, journals, but *mostly* researchers, it survived through *resistance* and perseverance. Thanks to Peter Trnka’s acceptance to serve as editor-in-chief and to his enthusiasm and active engagement, the journal is hosted by Memorial University of Newfoundland and finally saw the light of day. This project has been created in the spirit of friendship, *not* collaboration; collaborations, agreements, and partnerships are too rigid concepts/atmospheres to me as they are about interest and ready-to-pounce hostility *not* about generosity and hospitality on which this journal is *uncompromisingly* based. *Janus Unbound* was also created in the spirit of inclusion *not* exclusion, excellence *not* power, originality *not* received ideas, brains *not* symbolic titles, and so long as this continues, the journal will continue to do what it vows to.

Janus Unbound is, first and foremost, a journal of critical studies that seeks to promote a criticism defined by *truth, confrontation, and resistance*. As has probably

been understood, this journal does not speak postcolonially or from a postcolonial context—by which I mean that stifling place of avoidance, exclusion, and silence—nor does it seek to revise or correct postcolonial studies. It rather emerges as part of a longstanding anticolonial challenge to, first, colonialism, be it crude, hegemonic, “symbolically violent” (Bourdieu, 1990 133) or any other unconventional form, such as the colonialism of received ideas, and, second, to the dominant colonial discourse of postcolonial studies and like-minded disciplines that chain criticism, opposition, and resistance. *Janus Unbound* has a critical, *anticolonial* approach to everything it tackles and seeks *à la* Prometheus (the *un-chained* Prometheus) to unchain the chained, give fire to the oppressed—be it people, narratives, ideas, histories, or other captives—and voice to the avoided, silenced, excluded, and forgotten. It also emerges as part of a long, arduous project of a yet unfulfilled decolonization—in all aspects of life—which so far remains just an idea, an aspiration, and a fettered trial.

Janus Unbound takes a particular interest in World Literature, Cultural Studies, and the Humanities, yet is characterized by a deliberate lack of focus which allows it to go, if the necessity arises, to other fields of research. World Literature and Cultural Studies emerged as a result of a (canonical) colonization, but their effort, as I see it, missed the anticolonial, unfocused, and inclusive mark. Their critical, anticolonial energy has been subverted—worse, *perverted*—and resembles today what was once (and still is) the exclusive, colonial, and canonical energy of the Humanities.¹³ Today, World Literature, Cultural Studies, and the Humanities (and other disciplines, too) share the painful experience of colonial captivity; they have become, as it were, “postcolonial” disciplines by which I mean disciplines that *exclude, silence, avoid* and represent responsibility and justice gone awry. *Janus Unbound* does not seek to revise or correct World Literature, Cultural Studies, and the Humanities; it rather seeks to depart from that point when/where these disciplines went wrong, to pursue what they were supposed to but failed to do, and *begin again*. This is not to be understood as re-inventing the well-worn wheel, but as exploring what has been avoided, excluded, silenced, and forgotten while also being fully open to the new and other horizons. While it chose “the meaning of colonization in the 21st century” for its first issue to articulate clearly its intellectual position on colonization in general, and voice the generally avoided Palestine in particular, colonization as such is not to be understood as the only focus of *Janus Unbound*. By its Janus-ness, the journal can tackle many other faces of colonization, and by its unboundness, can go beyond this area and *in all directions*.

Resistance, the one I call *intellectual sabotage* in “Worientalism, or the Carrier of Firewood,” has been a decisive prompt for the development of this journal. Resistance is an untamed force. It does not avoid; *it confronts*. It does not speak lies; *it speaks truth*. It does not please; *it displeases*. The fear of displeasing ought not in the least to influence one’s intellectual actions. Besides, who said that intellect is to please? Resistance, be it criticism, opposition, or any other form, is, I believe, the cure-all for most of our ills in all aspects of life; it should be characterized by sheer courage, an astounding will to action, and by a no less astounding confidence in the possibility of change. The realization of such an ambitious project requires extraordinary preparation and infinite patience in execution.

In the course of reading this foreword, many would find what has been said bland, at times even tacky, but truth is better consumed bitter than falsely sweet. Others would grumble about the mess and noise it would create, but it is not part of a critic's responsibility to soothe tantrums. Others would require evidence for what has been said, but sometimes suffice it *to observe*. But there is that one reaction that only a few will have: *a smile*, one that says that the nail has been hit on the head and that more is ahead. I am aware that my exposition is of manifest crudities. I made it uncompromising purposely because this is how colonization ought to be confronted. However, I have to acknowledge that, as a young academic and a human being, I have never been able to mince words or call bad things by a good name.

Allow me to conclude this foreword. When I say that postcolonialism is dead, it does not mean that it will not be used from this time on, but that it is dead and will continue to be used, which is *the* problem. It is hoped that the postcolonial critic will grow conscious of the shortcomings of postcolonialism and its ideological trafficking. It is also hoped that, outside the rigidly academic field of this discipline and its so far unnoticed colonial discourse, an inspired resistance that recognizes the trials and tribulations of *all* the colonized of this world and that works toward *inclusively* decolonizing and doing justice to all the colonized without ideologically *avoiding* will someday regain its rightful place. And unless we depart from the postcolonial ways, awaken our mind from the lethargy and colonialism of received, often erroneous ideas, engage in a genuine resistance against everything that calcifies and becomes lethal, and *say no to the oppressor*, there will be no possibility of change. Until this responsibly occurs, *the world is and will remain colonial*; nothing will change in this scenario, only the players. And if you do not like the sound of that, you could always read courteous writings written with ideological tact and caution by well-brought-up academics, writings that will make you believe that everything is fine when everything is not.

Biography

Mohamed Salah Eddine Madiou is a researcher and British Council medal-winning debater. He interned at the Foreign Commonwealth Office on “counter-extremism,” was nominated for 2018 Youth Creativity Award and 2018 Award for Youth Empowerment, and received various government-sponsored grants for youth projects and his first PhD programme at the University of Jordan. He is currently doing his second PhD in English Literature at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Notes

1. My use of the concept of “postcolonialism” is for convenience only and is not to be understood as support on my part of this concept.
2. In this foreword, I am not following the logic that has it that “postcolonialism” (without a hyphen) refers to the discourse/theory/studies and “post-colonialism” (with a hyphen) refers to the period/time/condition. With or without a hyphen, I argue that postcolonialism is undefinable and problematic.
3. See “*Orientalism*, a Thousand and one Times” (Madiou 2020, 286).
4. In an email response to this foreword, Williams notes, using Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s phrase, that postcolonialism succeeded, albeit a teensy bit, in “decolonizing the mind.” I totally share Williams’ view that there was/is a critical, anticolonial energy that succeeded, albeit a teensy bit, in “decolonizing the mind.”

but I would not call this energy “postcolonial.” In the context of 20th century colonization, when/where the Ngũgian phrase of “decolonizing the mind” was most fashionable, “decolonizing the mind” was (thought to be) relatively feasible because colonization was (thought to be) relatively direct and easy to spot. Things, I argue, are different in our intensely globalized, capitalist, colonial context. We are all aware of colonization and its complexity in general, but do we precisely know how we are colonized? Do we fully understand how today’s various forms of colonizations operate on us? And can we really pin them down and keep track of all of them? Decolonization depends on the colonization it seeks to decolonize. And only when seeing, being aware of, and being able to pin down a colonization can one, I believe, *try* to decolonize oneself from it. Today, there are *so* many colonizations (particularly that of the mind), including colonizations that take the form of a smile and others that we are not aware of, that it is not easy to decolonize.

5. I am aware that journals’ issues are planned in advance and that new manuscripts have to wait the publication of those already scheduled for publication, but this I consider to be a problem in the case of issues that require urgent attention. This postponement, I submit, is another form of avoidance. Many journals publish, for instance, on Palestine but they do not do this in a *current* way; they do it at a later date. This maneuver kills two birds with one stone: they show that they “confront,” but, at the same time, they avoid by not publishing on the issue on time. This is not to say that, when these journals confront, they do it the right way; the confrontation is often very suspect.
6. “Many” here is what I believe defines the current state of affairs. Others would say just “a few,” which, although it does not, according to me, describe the current situation, is a possible answer. Qualifiers here depend on who speaks, the context one speaks from, and of whom the question is asked. As noted by a colleague in an email, UK academia, if asked the question, will reply differently, compared to US academia (and others). And academics in the Arab world will reply differently again. It should also be noted that some will qualify *ideologically*, meaning their use of “many,” “few,” “some” will *not* be based on how the situation is in reality, but on avoidance, quietism, caution, fear, anxiety, malice.
7. “Pacify,” here, does not refer to a genuine pacification but to a fake one. The hyphenated “Israel-Palestine war” should be stressed here again as an example. When a postcolonial critic uses the above hyphenated fallacy, they *disengage* themselves and establish a *calm* atmosphere of neutrality, of fake pacification. In our daily life, when one adopts the neutral view that “both (if both) parties are to blame,” they seek in a paradoxical way to establish “peace” between the two conflicting, blamable parties; they do this by attacking whatever war-like state the two (if two) parties are in and dismissing it as nonsensical, even childish. This view is generally expressed from what is thought to be an elevated plane and seeks by its “both (if both) parties are to blame” rhetoric to force a certain peace on a context that is not peaceful at all. This supposedly neutral and peaceful position should not be understood as neutral and peaceful; it is always in favour of the wrongdoer.
8. What I am criticizing in this foreword is the approach of those postcolonial critics who engage criticism with ideological caution, avoid out of fear and sometimes malice, and whose style of writing is so courteous, so characterized by hedging, and so afraid to speak with the right words that they actually end up defending another point of view, (perhaps) different from their initial view that was (perhaps) not as moderate as their final one. Of course, I am conscious

that many factors play a role in attenuating the resistance of a critic, one of which is publishing. Many publishers impose a certain decorum to abide by and a certain style to write with, without which the piece submitted for publication is rejected.

9. Edward Said defines “worldly” or “worldliness” as anything that is “a part of the social world [and] human life,” meaning anything that is situational and historical (1983, 4).
10. There can be a modicum of material escape from, for instance, capitalism as a form of colonialism, but ideological escape from it, particularly today, is, I argue, extremely difficult. See note 4 for a detailed explanation.
11. “Exappropriation” is a combination of “appropriation” and “expropriation;” it is, according to Derrida, to take away *to give away*, to confront *to move on*. Derrida replies to Jean Luc Nancy’s invitation to re-define the concept, saying: “Ce que je voudrais entendre par “exappropriation,” c’est que le geste de s’appropriier, et donc de pouvoir garder en son nom, marquer de son nom, laisser en son nom, comme un testament ou un héritage, il faut l’exproprier, il faut s’en séparer” (Derrida et al. 2006, 94).
12. Discussing “power,” of course, depends on what “power” is, what “power” one speaks about, and one’s definition of “power.” The same goes for “resistance;” discussing it depends on what “resistance” is, what resistance one speaks about, and one’s definition of resistance. Definition is important and necessary here as inside the power-side there is “resistance” and inside the resistance-side there is “power.”
13. See Stuart Hall’s essay “The Emergence of Cultural Studies and the Crisis of the Humanities” (1990) for a detailed discussion on how the Humanities were/are colonially exclusive and canonical.

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